

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
23 October 1960

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: World Reaction to President Kennedy's
Statement on Cuba

I. Sino-Soviet Bloc

There has been no significant reaction or comment from Sino-Soviet Bloc countries.

A. Warsaw radio termed the President's account of strategic missiles in Cuba as an "absurd and provocative statement."

II. Latin America

Latin American countries are lining up in support of President Kennedy's actions against the Soviet build-up in Cuba. Secretary General Mora has stated that the OAS will fully support the measures against Cuba, even to the point of using arms if necessary. Acting Chairman Lima has called for an immediate meeting of the Council of OAS in accordance with President Kennedy's request.

A. Mexican President Lopez Mateos, whose country has previously opposed sanctions against Cuba, is reported to have stated in Manila that Mexico would change its attitude if Cuba has armed itself for offensive purposes. President Goulart of Brazil, another country which has opposed sanctions, has indicated he will support the U.S. if the offensive build-up can be proved.

B. Argentina, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Nicaragua have pledged complete support. The President of the Uruguayan National Council of Government has given his personal approval but the Council itself has not yet made a decision. Ecuador will probably announce endorsement. Ambassador Soza of Venezuela has been instructed

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to give the US full support in the Security Council meeting.

C. The Dominican Ambassador to the OAS has been instructed to vote in favor of the US proposal to convene the OAS.

D. Haitian OAS Representative Baguidy has stated, "we cannot tolerate extra-continental forces in our hemisphere. Haiti is a loyal friend of the U.S."

E. Peru, Panama, Paraguay, and Honduras have not indicated a position yet but can be expected to underwrite the U.S. measures.

F. Bolivia is still not participating in the OAS because of the Lauca River dispute but also can be expected to go along with a position of hemispheric solidarity in counter-acting the build-up in Cuba.

G. Colombia alerted its armed forces just prior to President Kennedy's speech, and Venezuela reinforced its police patrols to watch for Communist violence. Extra guards were put around the United States Embassy in Caracas. The Salvadoran armed forces have also been put on alert "due to the grave situation of the Cuban case." In Chile, the Communist dominated CUTCH, which has been promoting Latin American solidarity for Castro, has announced readiness to call a nationwide strike on his behalf.

III. The British World

A. Published British reaction to President Kennedy's speech has been guarded, pending cabinet study. A Foreign Office spokesman said the revelation of Soviet military build-up in Cuba "will come as a shock to the whole civilized world." British officials declined, however, to indicate whether there would be any change in British policy toward Cuba. London stressed that, as far as was known, British charter ships have not been carrying arms to Castro. The London Times called the Soviet arming of Cuba an "astounding provocation" against the United States.

B. Prime Minister Diefenbaker suggested to the Canadian House of Commons that the eight non-aligned nations represented at the Geneva Disarmament Conference be permitted to make a fact-finding visit to Cuba to uncover the facts about the military build-up there. Opposition leaders generally endorsed the Prime Minister's proposal. Diefenbaker called

on Canadians, as well as free men everywhere, not to panic. Canadian Foreign Secretary Green said, meanwhile, that his government a few days ago had stopped Soviet planes enroute to Cuba and the Caribbean from landing at Canadian airbases. He declined to say the action was linked to US charges of a Soviet military build-up in Cuba.

C. Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies told the House of Representatives in Canberra that "President Kennedy had demonstrated the deceit practiced by the Soviet Union, and its determination by threat of aggression to terrorize nations whose only wish is for peace. We commend the President's statement."

D. No reaction has yet been reported from New Zealand.

IV. Western Europe

In Western Europe reaction ranged from favorable to non-committal, no reaction being antagonistic.

A. A West German government statement issued after the President's address stated that Bonn welcomed the US determination to counter the dangers created by the situation and added that West Germany has already made sure war materials will not be shipped to Cuba aboard German vessels. West Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt described President Kennedy's decision as "earnest, courageous, decisive, and temperate."

B. The President's speech was greeted in France by official silence. However, General De Gaulle seemed unusually interested and quite sympathetic during the briefing given him yesterday.

C. NATO representatives briefed on 22 October indicated their mood by asking, in effect, "What is our role and what do you want us to do?"

D. An official spokesman in The Hague gave as his government's initial reaction a statement that "It is gratifying that the United States has made its policy so clear that all parties know exactly where they stand." The American embassy feels the Dutch would not object to US efforts to deal with Castro. Dutch parliamentary sources hoped the US action would not lead to an intolerable situation in West Berlin.

E. In Denmark, the Prime Minister and the Defense Minister were noncommittal, saying that they would not make any special

military preparations but would follow events closely. The Prime Minister indicated no Danish ship was carrying strategic materials to Cuba.

F. A Foreign Ministry spokesman in Madrid stated the President's message was of "great importance" but that no detailed reaction would be available until it had been read in full.

G. The Italian newspaper Avanti said the blockade was an extremely grave decision which puts world peace in danger.

V. Asia and Africa

Asian and African reaction has been extremely light so far.

A. The government of Nationalist China announced full support for the US blockade, and instructed its United Nations delegation to support the American position in the Security Council.

B. The Japanese ambassador in Washington, after attending a State Department briefing yesterday, said "the situation is serious...this is indeed a grim moment." An unofficial Foreign Office statement issued in Tokyo says: "It seems the United States was obliged to adopt such an attitude because of unavoidable reasons. Such a development...is quite regrettable. We expect that this problem will be solved peacefully at UN meetings at the earliest possible opportunity."

C. Chairman Pak Chong-hui of the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction of South Korea stated that his government and people welcomed the fact that President Kennedy... had resolutely initiated the action necessary to crush Communist aggression in Cuba. He offered to render every possible support to the United States.

D. Government sources in Tel Aviv said Premier Ben Gurion was known to feel that the blockade was long overdue, but that he probably would not issue an official statement.

E. In Leopoldville, Adoula used colorful language in indicating his opposition to the type of aggression the USSR was carrying out from Cuba and stated his support for President Kennedy.